

Firefighters recognized at annual awards ceremony

Staff report

Firefighting is sometimes a thankless job, but recently a number of Salisbury city firefighters received a huge thank you for their service to the department.

The department had its annual awards ceremony at the Salisbury Civic Center. More than 150 people attended.

Jeff Miller received the Award of Valor for his part in the rescue of a fellow firefighter in a June 11 fire at Liberty Station.

Firefighter Nick Rogers was inside the building battling the blaze when the walls began to collapse around him. He made it out of the building with minor injuries.

Miller is certified in classes I and II and is a certified hazardous materials technician, emergency medical technician and driver/operator. He is a graduate of East Rowan High School. Miller began working for the department in October 2000. He volunteers with Liberty Fire Department. He lives in Salisbury with his wife Trina. They have two children, son Zach and daughter Kara.

This year's recipient of the R. Bernard Penley Community Service Award was Chipper Thomas for his participation in Relay for Life.

This award is given by the Penley family in honor of Deputy Chief Bernard Penley, who served 31 years. Penley was a mentor to younger members of the department. This annual award is given to the firefighter who exemplifies "service above self" both in the department and in the community as was demonstrated by Penley.

Thomas gave time and financial support to many of the projects that are accomplished throughout the year. Thomas also provided a great deal of time for retirees and other fire department events.

The Rookie Firefighter of the Year was Shawn McBride, who started with the department in March 2006 after graduating from Catawba College with a degree in business administration.

McBride excelled in rookie training, both in time and grades. He earned the highest possible grade — 100 percent — for his end-of-course test. McBride was recently certified as a hazardous materials technician. He lives in Salisbury with his family.

This year's Veteran Firefighter of the Year was Mark Thompson. Thompson is a 19-year member of the fire department, currently assigned to station No. 3.

He has served on many committees, including the Relay for Life team, the Salisbury Fire Department's Policy Development and Review Committee and the Muscular Dystrophy fundraising team.

Thompson is a certified firefighter who holds an associate's degree in fire technology. He is a hazardous materials technician and rescue technician. He is also a level II instructor and a role model for new firefighters. He has previously received the Customer Service Award. He lives in Salisbury with his wife, Melonie, and children Melissa, Jennifer, John and Chase.

Marshall Moore received the Customer Service of the Year award. This award is chosen by a committee. The recipient is nominated by his or her peers.

Moore has been with the department for more than 26 years and has received firefighter certification at level I and II status. He is a projects analyst, collecting statistics for the department. He is also the department's computer technician and grant writer. Moore is responsible for the Community Emergency Response Team. He lives in Salisbury with his wife, Tamara.

The Part-Time Firefighter of the Year was Kevin Dodd who has been with the department since the inception of the program in April 2005. He is a certified firefighter, fire officer, and an intermediate level emergency medical technician. Dodd lives in Cooleemee with his wife, Leanne and their three children, Kara, Kaitlin and Aaron.

During the ceremony, Terry Smith was named the city's new fire marshal. He began his duties at the beginning of July. Smith began with the Salisbury Fire Department in October 1996. He is a graduate of North Rowan and holds a bachelor's degree in health and physical education from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Smith has also received his associate's degree in fire protection technology. He is also a certified fire I and II, is an emergency medical technician, level II fire instructor, level III inspector, a rescue technician and is certified in swift water rescue.

He volunteers with Spencer Volunteer Fire Department and serves as assistant chief. Smith lives with wife, Amy, and children Corbin and Abbey.

Paul Rendleman was also recognized for nearly 30 years of service at the ceremony.

The department welcomed nine new firefighters. They are: Jawan Clark, Vic Isler, Jonathan McCaskill, Paul Medeiros, Logan Morris, Blake Nichols, Brian Sebastian, Lamar Sullivan and Joe Yowler.

Six new part-time firefighters also recently joined the department. They are: Karen Bednarik, Brian Carter, Justin Monroe, Steve Osborne, Patrick Sibley and Jennifer Wihoit.

David Clay, Ed Brown and Henry Bernhardt were named honorary firefighters for their continued support of Salisbury Fire Department and its activities.